

Appl. No. : 10/763,897
Filed : January 23, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claim 10 as follows. Insertions are shown underlined while deletions are ~~struck through~~.

1-9 (canceled)

10 (currently amended): A method for trapping a micro-crystal in a loop using the surface tension of liquid surrounding the micro-crystal, comprising:

placing on a base a liquid droplet containing in which micro-crystals are dispersed on a base, said droplet having a dome-shaped surface due to the surface tension of the droplet;

inserting a gripping member into the droplet;

gripping one of the micro-crystals in the droplet by the gripping member;

inserting a loop into the droplet and positioning the loop to place the micro-crystal ~~being gripped~~ substantially inside the loop while the micro-crystal is gripped by the gripping member and immobilized relative to the gripping member, said loop being configured small enough to retain liquid of the droplet therein by ~~closing~~ filling the loop with the liquid using its surface tension when separated from the droplet but being large enough to receive inside the loop a tip of the gripping member with the micro-crystal gripped by the gripping member; and

separating simultaneously the loop and the gripping member together from the droplet while substantially maintaining the position of the micro-crystal relative to being gripped by the gripping member in the vicinity of and the loop, so that thereby retaining the crystal is held inside the loop filled with liquid of the droplet surrounding the crystal with by the surface tension of the liquid.

11 (previously presented): The method as recited in Claim 10, further comprising observing and displaying at least the gripping member and the loop at said steps of inserting the gripping member, gripping the micro-crystals, inserting/positioning the loop, and separating the gripping member and the loop.

12-17 (canceled)

18 (previously presented): The method as recited in Claim 10, wherein the loop is positioned to place the micro-crystal being gripped on an upper side of the loop at the step of inserting the loop.

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19 (previously presented): The method as recited in Claim 11, wherein the loop is positioned to place the micro-crystal being gripped on an upper side of the loop at the step of inserting the loop, the step of inserting the loop is performed while observing the loop above the micro-crystal gripped by the gripping member.

20 (previously presented): The method as recited in Claim 10, wherein the step of separating the gripping member and the loop is conducted by lowering the base.

21 (previously presented): The method as recited in Claim 19, wherein the step of separating the gripping member and the loop is conducted by lowering the base.